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GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, July 19, 1932.

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Well, it's about time for you folks who live north of the Mason and Dixon line to be thinking about planting a patch of turnips. Here at Washington we can plant turnips as late as the middle of August and get a good crop. You folks who live in the South can plant turnips as late as the first of October or even later in some localities.

When I was a boy on an Ohio farm, we usually planted our turnips on the land where we grew our early potatoes. After digging the early potatoes, we cleaned off the old potato vines, harrowed the ground a couple of times, then dragged or rolled it to make the surface smooth and mellow. Then we sowed the turnip seed broadcast and depended upon a shower to cover it. Late in the fall we would store 25 or 30 bushels of turnips in an outside bank or pit for winter use and feed the balance of the crop to the livestock. We were just a little too far north for the turnips to remain in the ground over winter and make turnip greens for early spring use, in fact, I never knew how really good turnip greens are until I spent two or three winters in the South.

Speaking of greens, spinach is another crop worth planting for fall use. If you Northern gardeners will plant spinach 8 to 10 weeks before the first fall frosts you can generally get a crop before cold weather. You Southern gardeners can go right on planting spinach about every 30 days and have a supply of spinach greens all winter. Spinach will occasionally winter over in the open ground here at Washington, in fact it will stand considerable cold and is one of our most desirable fall and early spring greens.

Now I suppose that a good many of you farm folks are about through with the rush of early summer work and are finding time to sort of catch up with the work about the home, such as trimming the hedges, mowing the lawn, leveling the ruts in the driveway, repairing the fences and gates and other odds and ends of that nature. Now is a good time to clean out the rose beds and shrubbery borders and spread a layer of well rotted manure on the ground around the roses and shrubs. Roses especially need a little extra feeding at this time of the year.

If you intend to transplant any of the cone-bearing evergreens this season remember that July and August are good months for this job in the North and late August and September for the South. Of course you must move the plants with a ball of earth around the roots of each and then water them rather frequently until they become established. In the arid sections, and especially outside of the pine regions, the evergreens must be kept well watered.

(over)

While we're talking of ornamental plants, let me warn you to keep a close watch for shade tree insects. If you have catalpa trees about your place watch especially to see that the second brood of the Catalpa Sphinx Moth caterpillar doesn't get started and eat the leaves almost overnight. Dust or spray your catalpa trees with lead arsenate or any other arsenical poison to prevent damage by the Catalpa Sphinx caterpillar. Look over all shade, fruit and nut trees for the nests of caterpillars, and for insects that ruin the foliage. Remove and burn any caterpillar nests you find on your trees.

When you're looking over your orchard trees, I hope you don't find that blight has appeared. This disease is very prevalent in some sections this season. Here around Washington, I have seen apple and pear trees on which two-thirds of the branches of this year's growth are blighted. These blighted branches look as though they had been burned by fire. For the present there is really nothing you can do about blight damage. No spray or dust known to science will control this disease. All you can do now is stand by and wait until fall. Of course, if you have a blighted and unsightly apple or pear tree in your yard you can improve its appearance by cutting off the killed parts of the branches now, then in the fall cut the blighted branches well below the wood that is killed. Be sure to disinfect your pruning shears between each and every cut. Ask your county agricultural agent for the formula for a disinfectant solution to use on the pruning shears.

I see I'll have to leave you in a few seconds, but before I go let me tell you that we have had several reports recently of cabbage turning yellow and dying. This trouble is probably caused by cabbage yellows, a disease that lives over in the soil from year to year. Once the yellows gets started in a cabbage crop, you can't stop it. But you can prevent yellows damage to next year's crop by planting your cabbage on land where the yellows disease has not become established, also by planting strains of cabbage resistant to the disease. Mr. Eisenhower has told you of the success reported this year by workers of the Department and the Wisconsin Experiment Station in developing early cabbage varieties almost 100 per cent resistant to yellows disease. Yellows-resistant late varieties were available before this year.

Well, let's run over the list of seasonal jobs for gardeners and fruit growers that have cropped up in this chat today. For vegetable gardeners: In the North, turnip planting; in both North and South, planting of early fall spinach. For ornamental gardeners, top-dressing of rose and shrubbery beds with well rotted manure, transplanting cone-bearing evergreens, and search for caterpillar nests; also protection of catalpa trees against the Catalpa Sphinx Moth caterpillar.

For owners of pear and apple trees damaged by blight, preparations to prune out the blighted branches in the Fall. And for cabbage growers whose crops are hit by the yellows disease, a resolution to plant yellows-resistant varieties or plant on yellows-free soil next year.

Until next Tuesday, good-bye.